



September 14, 2004

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
1705 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Hoyer:

On behalf of the more than 1.3 million members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), I am pleased to support H.R. 4585, the Full-Service Community Schools Act of 2004.

This legislation will provide states with an opportunity to improve student learning and to strengthen families by integrating academics with other vital support services. H.R. 4585 recognizes that communities benefit when schools address the academic, physical, social and emotional well-being of students and their families, particularly those living in poverty. Evidence gathered in communities that have adopted this comprehensive approach shows that attendance improves, discipline and behavior problems are reduced, access to physical and mental health services increases, and communication between the school and parents is measurably higher. Not only are school buildings providing a broader outreach, they are also strengthening a community's commitment to the school.

We know that when children come to school healthy, well-nourished, and supported by their families and communities they are more likely to succeed both in and out of the classroom. The kinds of services supported by your legislation – such as providing for an after-school program, offering additional help to children who need it, making healthcare services available, or meeting the educational needs of parents – all work in concert to improve student achievement. This is particularly important as schools strive to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.

The AFT appreciates your commitment to children and communities of this country and applauds your vision in authoring the Full-Service Community Schools Act. We look forward to working with you to strengthen and pass this important bill.

Sincerely,

Kristor W. Cowan  
Deputy Director, Department of Legislation

KWC:jf

American Federation  
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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AFT Teachers  
AFT PSRP  
AFT Higher Education  
AFT Public Employees  
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